

Early Childhood Councils: Strengthening Colorado's Early Childhood System

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LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

Overview

During this presentation we will:

- Provide an overview of the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA).
- Discuss the history and purpose Early Childhood Councils.
- Share local successes, challenges, and programs from Early Childhood Councils in rural and urban communities.
- Offer legislative considerations to strengthen and sustain the network of Early Childhood Councils.

ECCLA: Our Mission

The mission of the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) is to *improve access to quality, capacity, and equity of services and supports for young children through a statewide network of Early Childhood Councils and key stakeholders. We meet this mission through local and statewide collaboration and leadership, policy and program alignment, and scaling innovation.*



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ECCLA: Strategic Priorities

- Build Council Capacity
- Leverage Policy and Advocacy
- Scale Early Childhood Innovation
- Improve Workforce Supports
- Advance Council Impact
- Facilitate Partnerships



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ECCLA: Support of Councils

- **As recommended by Child Trends 2016 evaluation of Councils:**
- ECCLA worked with Councils to define and **reaffirm a set of core functions** that are needed to measure statewide progress and evaluate collective impact.
- We are **advocating for flexibility and funding** to enable Councils to identify and address their local early childhood needs **across all domains**.
- ECCLA is developing a tracking tool that **measures and demonstrates Councils' common indicators and collective work** across counties and the state, guided by the Early Childhood Colorado Framework.
- Together with Councils, we will be able to **track trends over time**, report to key stakeholders, and **scale successful innovations to improve child well-being** for young children and their families.



Early Childhood Councils: History

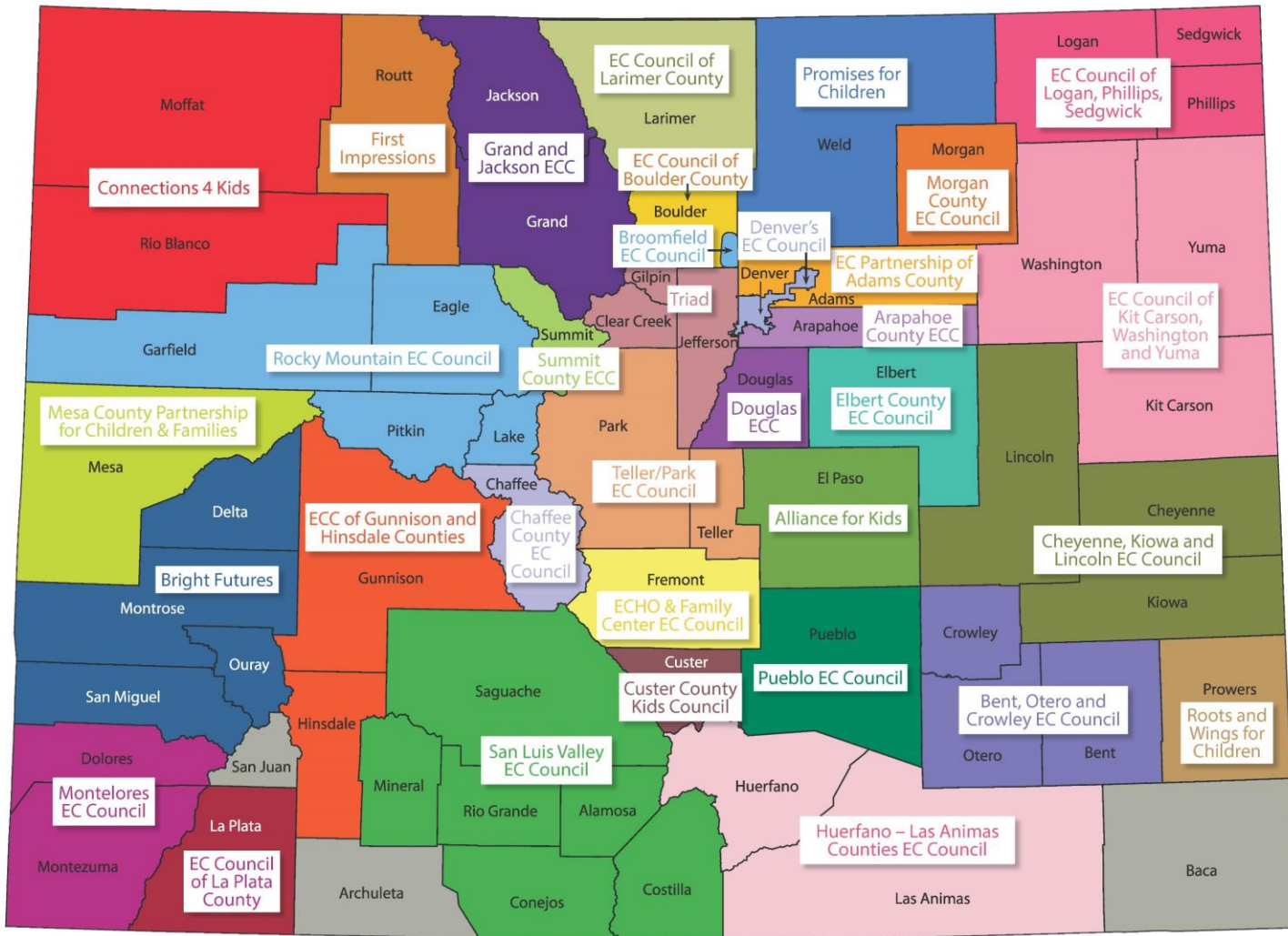
- In 1997, Colorado recognized the need for strong early childhood collaboration and piloted several communities to **strengthen and align resources to effectively serve young children.**
- In 2007, the Colorado General Assembly established Early Childhood Councils in legislation to positively impact services and supports for young children and their families by **building local early childhood systems.**
- Today, Colorado has 34 Early Childhood Councils, **serving 63 of 64 Colorado counties.**
- Aligning with Colorado's long tradition of local control, Councils are **locally organized and governed.**

Early Childhood Councils: Purpose

- Councils are charged with increasing and sustaining the **quality, accessibility, capacity, and affordability** of early childhood services for young children 0-5 years and their families.
- They focus on the all domains including **early care and education, family support, mental health, and health.**
- This wholistic approach builds and supports school readiness skills – often termed as ‘**systems building.**’



Colorado's Early Childhood Councils



Early Childhood Councils: Funding

- Child Care and Development Fund (federal pass-through \$\$)
 - Quality Improvement Funding – Colorado Shines
 - Early Childhood Systems Building Funding
- Local Funds (**may not be available in every community**)
 - Local government (county, city)
 - Tax and ballot initiatives
 - Foundation grants
 - Public/private grants
 - Corporate and grassroots fundraising
 - Fees for service
- State Funds
 - General funds removed in 2012
 - ECCLA advocacy efforts restored one-time funding of \$1M in 2018



Early Childhood Councils: Strengths

- Laser **focus** on early childhood.
- **Local** convener and collaborator.
- Support **all areas** – early learning, health and mental health, family support and parent education.
- Councils reach childcare providers in **every corner** of our state.
- Early childhood “**boots on the ground.**”
- **Valued** by many state agencies and early childhood organizations.



Early Childhood Councils: Challenges

- Limited and **highly restricted funding**.
- Staff have **limited capacity** (1-4 staff is typical).
- **Increasingly called upon** by state agencies and early childhood organizations to:
 - Expand and enhance programs and services,
 - Measure and provide data, and
 - Assist with new/expanded programs and supports.



Rocky Mountain ECC

School Readiness - The Local Picture

Shortage of Available Childcare

	Population	Children Under 5	Total Childcare Slots	% of Population Served
Eagle	53,928	3,214	1721	54%
Garfield	58,984	3,917	1394	36%
Lake	7,595	403	157	39%
Pitkin	17,773	646	590	91%



Rocky Mountain ECC

Strengths

- A four-county region working together to promote and support a system of quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood services in our region.
- Experienced, strong fiscal partner.
- Working to implement and expand ECMH Toolkit across the region.
- Strong network of credentialed and highly skilled coaches.
- 74% of our 124 licensed programs accept CCCAP.
- 64% of childcare programs at Level 2 or higher.
- Incredible Years, Pyramid Plus, FLIP-IT! Parenting classes and other trainings held in the region.
- Year-round access to outdoor activities in the mountain region.

Rocky Mountain ECC

Challenges

- Licensed programs are only able to serve 20% (at most) of the under 3 population.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Limited resources for families.
- Lack of a livable wage - many providers qualify for subsidies.
- Continuing need for specialists to serve children and families with identified needs.





El Paso County –Alliance for Kids

450

HIGHEST Early Care and
Education Programs

2623

HIGHEST –
Children/families CCCAP

17

School Districts

46,731

HIGHEST - children
under 5 years

97

High parent request
for child care referrals



EARLY CARE &
EDUCATION WORLD



SUPPORTING QUALITY CARE IN EL PASO COUNTY

449 Total Programs

100 CCCAP Programs
(22% of Total)

349 Non-CCCAP
(78% of Total)

Level 2-5

44%



Level 1
56%

Level 2-5

75%



Level 1

25%

Level 2-5

36%



Level 1
64%



Level 2-5 = Engaged in Quality Improvement

CCCAP Sites Eligible for AFK Supports

Non-CCCAP NOT Eligible for AFK Supports

A CLOSER LOOK | High Quality (Level 3-5) vs. Level 1-2

452 Total Programs

106 CCCAP Programs
(23% of Total)

346 Non-CCCAP
(77% of Total)

Level 3-5

23%



Level 1-2
77%

Level 3-5

46%



Level 1-2
54%

Level 3-5

16%



Level 1-2
84%

Supporting Early Care & Education Professionals

487

Engaged In Training and
One-on-One Support

175

Increased Professional
Credential Level in PDIS

16

Reflective Supervision
Sessions for Coaches

228

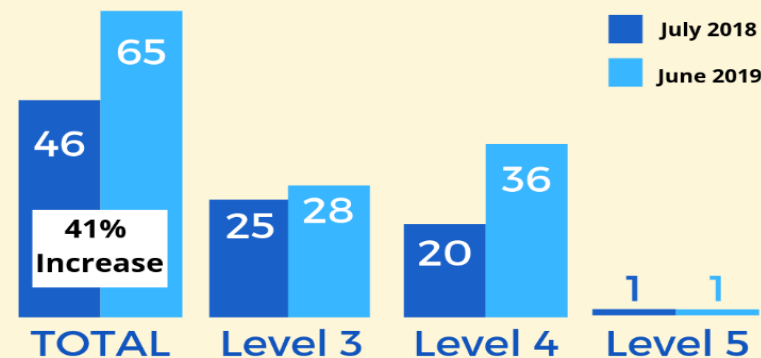
Supported
with QRIS/PDIS
Resources

“ We noted a significant increase in engagement in professional development supports when we moved from offering group information sessions to individual meetings. ”

AFK Supported Professionals with 51 Scholarships.



High Quality Infant/ Toddler Programs



22 Level 3-5 Sites Holding AFK MOU
Added 1 or more Infant/Toddler Slots

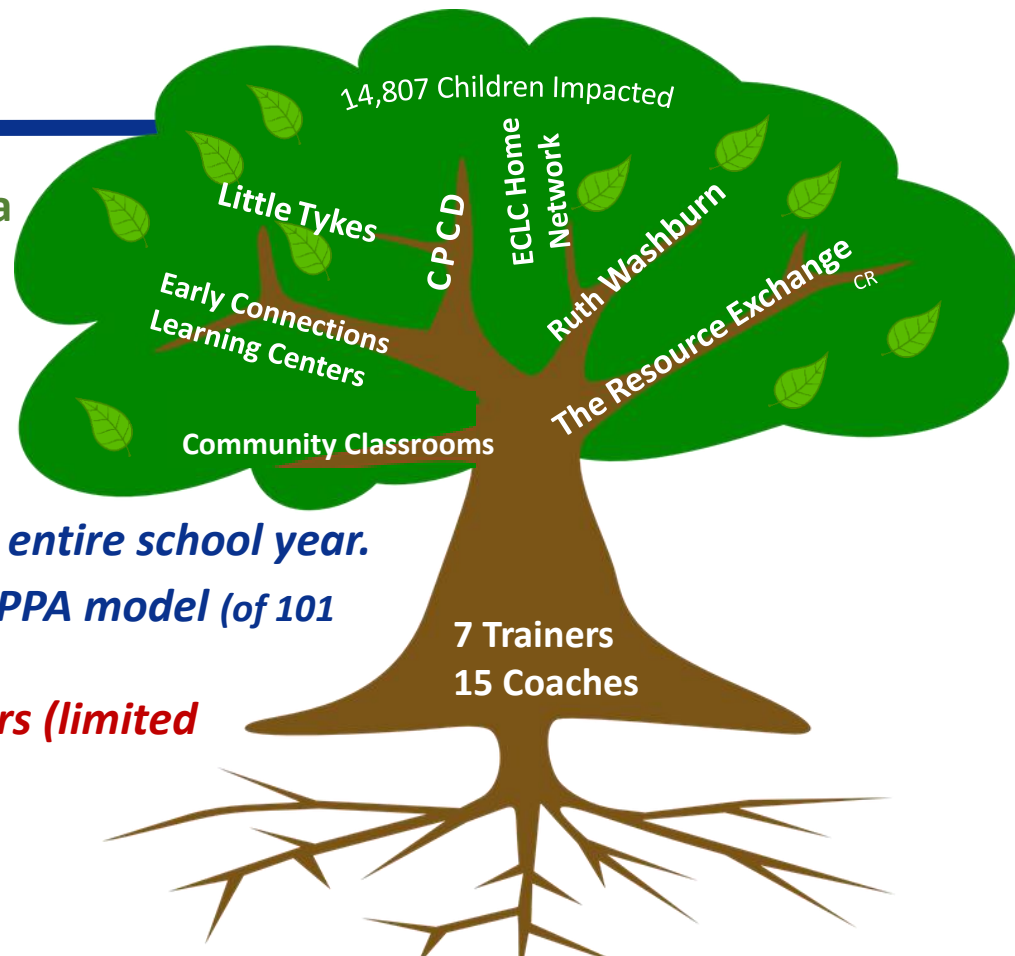
10 CCCAP Infant/Toddler Sites
Increased from Level 1 to Level 2



Health & Well-Being

Pyramid Plus Approach (PPA): Wrapped up a 3.5 Year Project - *Exceeded Expectations*

- *6 Sustaining Implementation Sites*
- *568 ECE professionals completed intensive PPA training.*
- *229 teachers coached in classroom for entire school year.*
- *69 (68%) teachers achieved fidelity to PPA model (of 101 observed).*
- *14,807 children impacted over 3.5 years (limited duplication of children)*
- *6166 parents trained*
- *278 in Positive Solutions for Families*





One teacher's story of impact...

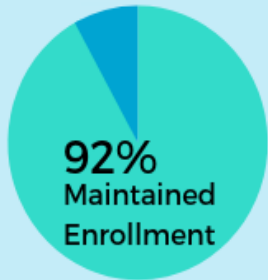
“Life changing....”

“I’m more focused on the social and emotional development of children now...on what is going on with each individual child that will help them do better next year in kindergarten - giving them those social and emotional skills that they need, that they might not always get.”

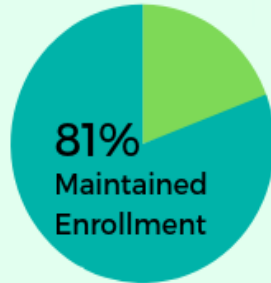
PPA - Impacting the Workforce

ECMH: Referral Status & Child Outcomes

Overall, 10 Children Did Not Maintain Enrollment (One from ECMH Rural Expansion)



124 Total Children Referred



52 Total Children At-Risk for Expulsion

“This training should be required for every person who is going to work in child care. It helps you see why children act like they do and helps you understand how to work with them to make them comfortable in the classroom. It helps with parents too.”

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Professional Learning Communities

Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist Supports



Family Support & Education

Positive Solutions for Families In partnership with TRE

PSFF provides information for families on how to promote children's social-emotional skills, understand their challenging behavior, and use positive approaches to help children learn appropriate behavior.

- *More than 300 parents/caregivers trained*
- *Added Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) session to training*
- *Waiting list of organizations desiring PSFF classes for the families they serve*



Families are aware of the available resources and requirements to access resources.

2GO

Short-Term Outcomes



2GO partnerships gain a better understanding early child care and education needs of families, including barriers.



Parents learn skills to break negative family cycles in order to have healthier relationships.



Establishment of two Family Voice/peer support groups.





Family Support & Education

Playgroups to support School Readiness Skills

Results:

- **96%** of children interact **more** with others their age
- **79%** of adults socialize **more** with other parents/caregivers
- **88%** **gained new** knowledge of community resources & Early Language and Literacy
- **63%** **gained new** knowledge of children's social emotional behavior

2GO Project

19 Community Partners

175 Participant Families

Surveys, Focus Groups, ACEs Training, Family Voice Meetings

Sustaining & Promoting

FamilySPEAK

Family Support | Parent Education | Knowledge

Foundations to THRIVE

Promotion of Best Practices in One Large ECE Center

- Parenting Education and Impact of ACEs
- Informing Staff on Family Engagement

Temple Hoyne Buell funding supports Council systems-building efforts and FamilySPEAK staff.

Challenges

Lack of Resources to Support the Need

- Council funding
- Colorado Shines
- CCCAP funds

Behavioral/social-emotional supports

- ECE workforce
- Parents/families

Huerfano/Las Animas ECC

Shortage of Child Care		
	Huerfano	Las Animas
Population	6,889	14,503
Children Under 5	260	869
Total Child Care Slots	142	330
% of Population Served	54.6%	37.9%
Free / Reduced Lunch	72.1%	45.4%
Full Day Kindergarten	100%	100%
Special Education	10.9%	15.2%



Huerfano/ Las Animas ECC

Strengths

- Rural/frontier communities- diverse partners working together towards a comprehensive model **“it takes a village.”**
- Strong fiscal partner.
- Successful community screenings.
- High-quality child care serving most vulnerable population.
- Reach Out and Read.
- Cooking Matters.
- Ensuring car seat safety.
- Family engagement programs.
- Farm to School- beginning stages.



Huerfano/ Las Animas ECC

Challenges

- Access to childcare, medical & behavioral health providers, housing, healthy food, transportation and internet access.
- Limited sustainable funding for internal growth of services across domains; despite population growth and need.
- Resources nonexistent, limited or at capacity.
- Recruitment and retention of qualified workforce.
- 1 in 3 children live in poverty.
- Third largest fire and now historic flooding predicted.



Legislative Considerations

- Restore \$1 million in state general funds to support the system building efforts of Councils.
- Consider an annual allocation of state general funds to support the sustainability of Councils.
- Ensure stakeholders from the various state agencies and early childhood organizations convene to build consensus on the role, value, and long-term funding of Councils.



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